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CALCUTTA DURING LAST CENTURY

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CALCUTTA DURING LAST CENTURY:

A LECTURE

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By H. BLOCHMANN, Esq., M. A.

The first historical notice regarding Calcutta is to be found in the Aín-i-Akbarí, a book written in 1596 by Abul Fazl, the prime-minister of the Emperor Akbar. In the numerous revenue tables given in that valuable work, we read that the district of Hughli, or, as it was then called, the Sirkar of Sátgánw, contained among others the three towns of Calcutta, Barbakpur, and Bakúyá (?), jointly paying into the imperial exchequer the annual sum of 9,36,215 dáms, a sum equivalent to Rs. 23,405. The name of Calcutta is generally connected with Kálí, the Hindoo goddess. In books written in the past century, we find for Calcutta the spelling Calicotto, Calcutta, and even Golgota; but the name given in the Ain is "Kalkatta," as spelled and pronounced by the natives now-a-days. The name of the place Kalighaut, south of Calcutta, is of course connected with the temple at that place.

The town of Calcutta must also be mentioned in the revenue tables of Aurangzíb; but I am sorry I have not yet been able to get at them.

It was during the reign of Aurangzíb, on the 20th December 1686, that the agent and council of the English factory at Hughli, in consequence of a rupture with the Moghul Faujdar stationed there, left Hughli for Sootanattee (or Chattanattee),* a village on the banks of the river Hughli, north of the then town of Calcutta. Sootanattee extended from the present Calcutta mint to Soba Bazar. The factors and soldiery had to live in huts until they could provide proper accommodation.† The Company's agent was Mr. Job Charnock, who had formerly been the chief of the English Factory at Qasimbazar, near Berhampore. After leaving Hughli, he had first

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* Hamilton. † Orme.

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tried to establish himself at Oolabaria, south of Howrah; but the village of Sootanattee was ultimately preferred. When peace was re-established between the Moghuls and the Company, Charnock twice removed the factory, but settled for good, in 1689, at Sootanattee. Captain Alexander Hamilton, who spent his time in the East Indies, from 1688 to 1723, "trading and travelling by sea and land between the Cape of Good-Hope and the Island Japan," has the following account of Charnock, and the new settlement:—

"The English settled at Calcutta about the year 1690, after the *Mogul* "had pardoned all the robberies and murders committed on his sub- "jects. *Mr. Job Charnock* (or Channock, as Hamilton spells it) "being then the Company's Agent in *Bengal*, he had the liberty to "settle an *emporium* in any part on the river's side below *Hughly*, "and for the sake of a large shady tree chose to that place, though "he could not have chosen a more unhealthy place on all the river; "for three miles to the north-eastward is a salt-water lake that over- "flows in *September* and *October*, and then prodigious numbers of fish "resort thither, but in *November* and *December*, when the floods are "dissipated, those fishes are left dry, and with their putrefaction affect "the air with thick stinking vapours, which, the north-east winds, "bring with them to *Fort William*, that they cause a yearly "mortality. One year I was there [this must have been soon after "1706], and there were reckoned in *August* about 1,200 *English*, some "Military, and some servants to the Company, some private merchants "residing in the town, and some seamen belonging to the shipping "lying at the town, and before the beginning of *January*, there were "four hundred and sixty burials registered in the Clerk's Book of "Mortality.

"Mr. *Charnock* choosing the ground of the Colony where it now "is, reigned more absolute than a *Rajah*, only he wanted much of "their humanity, for when any poor, ignorant native transgressed his "laws, they were sure to undergo a severe whipping for a penalty, "and the execution was generally done when he was at dinner, so "near his dining room that the groans and cries of the poor delin- "quent served him for music.

"The country about being overspread with *Paganism*, the custom of "wives burning with their deceased husbands, is also practised here. "Before the *Mogul's* war, Mr. *Charnock* went one time with his

" ordinary guard of soldiers to see a young widow act that tragical " catastrophe, but he was so smitten with the widow's beauty, that he " sent his guards to take her by force from the executioners, and con- " ducted her to his own lodgings. They lived lovingly many years, " and had several children ; at length she died, after he had settled " in *Calcutta*, but instead of converting her to Christianity, she made " him a proselyte to *Paganism*, and the only part of *Christianity* that " was remarkable in him, was burying her decently, and he built a " tomb over her, where all his life after her death he kept the anniver- " sary-day of her death by sacrificing a cock on her tomb, after the " *Pagan* manner. This was, and is, the common report, and I have " been credibly informed, both by *Christians* and *Pagans*, who lived " at *Calcutta* under his Agency, that the story was really true matter " of fact."

" He retained a sergeant as a bully, and allowed the secretary " and captain of soldiers to keep a punch-house and billiard table, " and to send in false returns to his employers, in aid of the tavern " funds. The Home Government, until the days when all their atten- " tion was absorbed by jealousy of rival trading associations, did what " they could to restrain the licentiousness of their servants abroad, " remarking that the disorderly conduct of their factors tended to the " dishonor of God, the discredit of the Gospel of our Lord, and the " shame and scandal of the English nation ; they sent out strict rules " for the conduct of their subordinates, and directed that hardened " offenders should be at once sent home. They also directed the use of " a form of prayer, beseeching God that *these Indian nations, amongst* " *whom we dwell, seeing our sober and righteous conversation, may be* " *induced to have a just esteem for our most holy profession of the* " *Gospel.*" (Raike's " Englishman in India.)"

According to Orme's History, Mr. Charnock was a man of courage without military experience, but impatient to take revenge on the Moghul Government, from whom he had personally received the most ignominious treatment, having been imprisoned and scourged by the mob. This was perhaps the reason of the unwarrantable usage of the natives ascribed to him by Hamilton. According to an oral tradition, Charnock built a bungalow at Barrackpore, and a flourishing bazar arose under his patronage, before the settlement of Calcutta had been determined upon. Barrackpore is even now-a-days called

by the Natives Chának, in which word Charnock's name is easily traceable. The Cantonment of Barrackpore was founded in February 1775. Charnock died on the 10th January 1692. His monument stands in the compound of the present St. John's Church, which occupies the site of the old cemetery of Calcutta.

The following account of the settlement of the English at Calcutta is taken from Price's Observations:—"When the English first settled "at Fort William in Bengal, or Calcutta, the little body of merchants, "instead of fixing themselves on the west side of the river, as all "other Europeans had done before and since, determined on a very "*small spot of rising ground* on the east-side. If I remember right, "their reasons for this choice were, that it was situated near to several "*populous* villages, filled with cloth manufacturers, whom they wished "to engage in their service; that they should be free from the inva-"sions of the Mahrattas, who in those days were very troublesome "some to those settled on the west-side of the river; that the "anchorage for their ships was very good, and near the place on "which they proposed to erect a little fort; and the ground itself "did not cost them much money."

Such reasons may indeed have induced Charnock to settle at Sootanattee. There are several historical accounts showing that the inhabitants of the western sides of the river invariably repaired to Calcutta on the slightest rumour of an approach of the Mahrattas. The remarks regarding the *rising* ground is also correct; for the ground of old Calcutta *is* high, as any one can see by walking from Clive Street to the river. According to Simm's survey of Calcutta (in 1851), Clive Street was, in fact, found to be the highest point in the whole modern town of Calcutta, being nearly thirty-one feet above the zero of the tide-gauge in Kidderpore, whilst the lowest part of Calcutta, Muchoa Bazar, has a height of eighteen feet only.

In 1696, during a rebellion of Subha Sing, the English at Sootanattee, the Dutch at Chinsurah, and the French at Chandernagor, requested permission to put their factories in a state of defence; and Ibrahim Khan, then Governor of Bengal, having in general terms assented, they proceeded with great diligence to raise regular fortifications.* Thus arose the old Fort William, of which more

* W. Hamilton; Orme.

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shall be said hereafter. In 1700, Prince Azím Ushshán, Aurangzib's son, and successor of Ibrahim Khan, in consideration of a valuable present, permitted the agents of the Company to purchase three places with the lands adjacent to their fortified factory, *viz.*, Suttanattee, Calcutta, and Gobindpoor. These three places extended along the river from Chitpore to about Cooly Bazar, the town of Calcutta extending from about 100 yards north of Clive Street to Baboo's Ghaut. As the fort occupied a part of the ground of Calcutta, the whole settlement was thus called. Captain Alexander Hamilton states that the southern limit of the settlement, at about a league below the fort, was marked by a little pyramid, whilst the northern boundary was near Baranagur, about six miles higher up the river, the salt-water lakes being the boundary on the land side. The part of the settlement near the little pyramid just now mentioned, is called by Hamilton "Governagore," which name is also mentioned on Orme's plan of Calcutta in 1757. In 1717, a forest existed to the south of Chandpal-ghaut, which forest was afterwards gradually removed. Between this wood and Kidderpore, on the site of the Esplanade and the present fort, there were two small villages, the inhabitants of which were invited to settle in Calcutta by the ancient family of the Sets. This family, the members of which were merchants of great note, were very instrumental in giving Calcutta the position of a town. The ground of Chowringhee was, in 1717, occupied by a small village, consisting of straggling houses, surrounded by puddles of water. Near the southern limit of Calcutta itself, there was a creek which ran from Chandpal-ghaut to Ballia-ghaut near the salt lakes. Orme calls this creek a deep, miry gully. The ditch took its course before Government-house, and across Dhurmtollah towards Wellington square. Wellington square tank was made upon the site of this ancient creek, which has been the cause of its banks and ghauts continually giving way.* There was also quicksand in the bed of the tank, and the water could not be retained, until, in 1849, the banks and the bed were, at some cost, reconstructed. I may mention that this tank, as well as several others, were made by the Lottery Committee. Until lately there was a ditch to the south of Boitakanah, which showed traces of the continuation of this creek. The creek has given the name to Creek Row, whilst its native

* Simm's Survey.

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name, Dinga Bhanga, is said to have its origin in the wrecking, at that place, of a ship which, during the terrible cyclone of 1737, had been driven up by a storm-wave from the river.* Between Ballia-ghaut and Calcutta there intervened a jungle two miles in extent, infested by tigers and other ferocious animals. "The then "town of Calcutta," says Hamilton, "was built without order, as the "builders thought most convenient for their own affairs, every one "taking in what ground best pleased them for gardening, so that in "most houses you must pass through a garden into a house, the "*English* building near the river side, and the natives within land. "The town in all may contain 10 or 12,000 souls—Hamilton was "in Calcutta about 1710;—and the Company's revenues are pretty "good and well paid. They rise from ground-rents and consulage "on all goods imported and exported by *British* subjects, but all "nations besides are free from taxes." The old Fort William stood between Dalhousie-square and the river. "It was built," Hamilton continues, "an irregular tetragon of brick and mortar, called *puckah*, "which is a composition of brick dust, some molasses and cut hemp, "and when it comes to be dry, is as hard, and tougher, than firm "stone. The Governor's House in the fort is the best and most "regular piece of architecture that I ever saw in *India*. And there "are many convenient lodgings for factors and writers, within the "fort, and some store houses for the Company's goods, and maga-"zines for their ammunition. The Garrison of Fort *William* "generally consists of 200 or 300 soldiers, more for to convey their "fleet from *Patana*, with the Company's saltpetre, and piece-goods, "raw silk, and some opium belonging to other merchants, than for "the defence of the fort.

"In 1706, when the whole stock of the Company had been removed "to Calcutta, the garrison consisted of 129 soldiers, of whom sixty-"six were Europeans. About fifty yards from *Fort William* stands "the Church built by the pious charity of merchants residing there, "and the *Christian* benevolence of seafaring men, whose affairs call

* There stood also in Boitakanah, near the Sealdah Station, a large tree, famous from the earliest times as a place of assemblage of native merchants. It was at last cut down in 1799, when the roads about Calcutta, and among them the Circular Road, were made by order of Marquis Wellesley. (Mod. Topography of Calcutta.)

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"them to trade there ; but ministers of the Gospel being subject to "mortality, very often young merchants are obliged to officiate, and "have a salary of fifty pounds *per annum* added to what the Company "allows them, for their pains in reading prayers and sermons on "*Sundays*."

The church referred to is the old St. John's Church, which stood at the western extremity of Writers' buildings. It was built about 1710, and was destroyed by Sirájud-daulah in 1756. This Church is said to have been perfect in composition ; its steeple was very lofty and uncommonly magnificent. The Governors, every Sunday, walked to it in solemn procession, attended by all the servants of the Company, and the Military off duty. "In Calcutta," Hamilton continues, "all religions are freely tolerated but the *Presby-* "*terian*, and that they brow-beat. The *Pagans* carry their idols in "procession through the town. The *Roman Catholics* have their Church* "to lodge their idols in, and the *Mahometan* is not discountenanced, but "there are no polemics, except what are between our High-Churchmen "and our Low, or between the Governor's party and other private merchants on points of trade."

The Roman Catholic Church mentioned must have been the Portuguese Church. Books on Roman Catholic Missions are full of the praise of Francis Laynez, a second Francis Xavier ; he visited Calcutta in 1712, where he was received with the highest honors by the English Governor. The Armenians, who were very numerous in Calcutta already in Hamilton's time, performed Divine Service in a temporary chapel, about a hundred yards south of the present Armenian Church. The ground on which the Church now stands was used as a burial ground. The present Armenian Church was founded in 1724 by national contributions under the auspices of

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* This must be the Portuguese Church marked on Orme's plans of Calcutta in 1756 and 1757. The present Murghihatta Cathedral stands on its place. Marshall's "Christian Mission" (a Catholic review of Catholic and Protestan Missions) says that after Sirájud-daulah had destroyed the English Church, the English drove away the Portuguese and held Divine Service in the old Portuguese Church (?) The article "Kiernander" in Marshall is noticeable. Kiernander is said to have "ogled from the pulpit with two fat and rich ladies of his congregation," and married them. He got £25,000 with the second. Kiernander's "banquets and wine were famous in England."

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Agá Nazar, to whose honor the Church is called St. Nazaret's Church. The steeple was added in 1734 ; the architect was Cavond, an Armenian from Persia.

"The Company," Hamilton says, "has a pretty good Hospital at "*Calcutta*, where many go in to undergo the penance of physic, but "few come out to give account of its operation. The Company has "also a pretty good Garden that furnishes the Governor's table with "herbage and fruits, and some fish ponds to serve his kitchen with "good carps, calkops, and mullet. Most of the inhabitants of *Calcutta*, "that make any tolerable figure, have the same advantages ; and all "sorts of provisions, both wild and tame being plentiful, good, and "cheap, as well as clothing, make the country very agreeable. On "the other side of the river are docks made for repairing and fitting "their ships' bottoms, and a pretty good garden belonging to the "*Armenians* (which explains the name of Armenian ghaut), that had "been a better place to have built their Fort and Town in for many "reasons. One is, that where it now stands the afternoon's sun is "full in the front of the houses, and shines hot on the streets that "are both above and below the fort ; the sun would have sent its "hot rays on the back of the houses, and the fronts had been a good "shade for the streets.

"*Most* gentlemen and ladies in *Bengal* live both splendidly and "pleasantly, the forenoons being dedicated to business, and after "dinner to rest, and in the evening to recreate themselves in chaises "or *palankins* in the fields, or to gardens, or by water in their "*budgeroes*, which is a convenient boat that goes swiftly with the "force of oars ; and on the river sometimes there is the diversion of "fishing or fowling, or both ; and before night, they make friendly "visits to one another, when pride or contention do not spoil society, "which too often they do among the ladies, as discord and faction do "among the men. And although the conscript fathers of the colony "disagree in many points among themselves, yet they all agree in "oppressing strangers who are consigned to them, not suffering them "to buy or sell their goods at the most advantageous markets, but of "the Governor and his Council, who fix their own prices, high or low, "as seemeth best to their wisdom and discretion.

"The Colony has very little manufactory of its own ; for the Go-"vernment being pretty arbitrary, discourages ingenuity and industry

"in the populace ; for, by the weight of the Company's authority, if a "Native chances to disoblige one of the upper-house, he is liable to "arbitrary punishment, either by fine, imprisonment, or corporal "sufferings."

Among the men living at Calcutta in the beginning of the eighteenth century, I must mention William Hamilton, the well-known surgeon, who, by a happy cure performed in 1716 on the Emperor Farrukh Siyar, procured for the English the grant of thirty-seven villages, and the privilege of sending their goods free through the country on passes signed by the President of Calcutta.* These passes were called dastaks: they remained in force till 1771. Hamilton died on the 4th December 1717. The slab of his tomb with an English and a Persian inscription, lies in the Charnock Mausoleum, in the compound of the present St. John's Church, which stands on the site of the Old Cemetery of Calcutta. The slab was found when the ground round the Church was cleared away in 1802 ; for, before that time, the tombs of the old Cemetery had fallen into a state of irreparable decay, so that it was necessary to clear the burial ground which had been long out of use. Only those tombs whose inscriptions were legible, and the sepulchre of the Charnock family were left. †

I alluded above to the great Cyclone of 1737. The following is a description of it taken from the *Gentlemen's Magazine* of 1738 ‡:— "In the night, between the 11th and 12th October 1737, there hap- "pened a furious hurricane at the mouth of the Ganges, which reached "sixty leagues up the river. There was at the same time a violent "earthquake, which threw down a great many houses along the river's "side. In 'Golgota' alone, a port belonging to the English, 200 "houses were thrown down, and the high and magnificent steeple of "the English Church (old St. John's) sunk into the ground without "breaking. It is computed that 20,000 ships, boats, sloops, canoes, "&c., have been cast away. Of nine English ships then in the "Ganges, eight were lost, and most of the crews drowned. Barks of "sixty tons were blown two leagues up into the land over the tops of "high trees. Of four Dutch ships in the river, three were lost with

* Gladwin's Bengal Narrative.

† Obituary.

‡ Copied from 'Medical Topography of Calcutta.'

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"their men and cargoes. 300,000 souls are said to have perished. "The water rose forty feet higher than usual in the Ganges."

Of the Schools* then in Calcutta, the old Charity School is often mentioned. It was subsequently destroyed during the capture of Calcutta, in 1756, by Sirájud-daulah. On the receipt of the restitution-money from Mir Muhammad Jáfar in 1757, the Charity School obtained a certain portion; and the interest on this property, and on a legacy of 6 or 7,000 rupees left by a Mr. Constantine, the rent of the Old Court house, formerly appropriated to the School and transferred to the Company for a perpetual payment of rupees 800 per mensem, and the Church collections, maintained about twenty boys, and enabled the vestry of the Old St. John's to bestow some trifling charitable donations. In the course of years, the old Charity School became quite inadequate; and in order to provide for the education of the numerous indigent Christian children, the Free School was established on the 2nd December 1789, with which the old Charity School was united on the 14th April 1800. The Old Court house, which I mentioned just now, was built by Mr. Bourchier, a successful merchant of Calcutta and afterwards Governor of Bombay. He gave it to the Company, because there was in Calcutta no Town Hall, nor a house for the Mayor and Aldermen to hold their court in, under the condition that the Company should pay 4,000 Arcot rupees per annum to support a charity school, and for other benevolent purposes.† When, in 1765, great additions were made to the Court house,‡ the Company agreed to pay rupees 800 a month to the fund of charity for the school and other benevolent uses. Lastly, when the ruinous state of the building made it necessary to pull it down, the Company most generously agreed to pay the 800 rupees in perpetuity.

The liberal spirit of the citizens of Calcutta has often been noticed. To cite a few examples of the past century, I may mention the names of Charles Weston and the Baretto family.§ Charles Weston was the son of the Recorder of the Mayor's Court. He was born at Calcutta in 1731 in a house opposite to where the Tiretta Bazar now stands. He acquired a large fortune, and left about a lakh of rupees,

* From Lushington's Institutions of Calcutta.

† Lushington.

‡ Chiefly by the liberal spirit of the inhabitants of Calcutta.

§ Obituary.

the interest of which is still monthly distributed by the vestry of St. John's to a large number of the poor in Calcutta. He was at first in the employment of Governor Holwell, so well known as one of the survivors of the Black Hole Tragedy.* When his old patron fell into pecuniary difficulties, Mr. Weston generously provided for the comfort of his latter days. Mr. Weston died in 1809; his tomb is in the South Park Street Burial Ground. Of the Baretto family, I may mention John Baretto, who left a legacy of about five lakhs to various Calcutta Churches, irrespective of denomination; Joseph Baretto, who bought the ground for the Portuguese burial ground in Baitakanah, also known as a Persian scholar,† and Mrs. Baretto D'Souza, who founded, in 1832, the Roman Catholic Church in Dhurrumtollah.

I have to say a word on the *Mahratta Ditch*. Examples of distress caused by the flights of the inhabitants of the other side of the river to Calcutta were so numerous, that, in 1742, the Indian residents of the Settlement requested, and obtained, permission to dig a Ditch at their own expense round the Company's lands,‡ from the northern part of Sootanatee to the southern part of Govindpore. The work would extend seven miles, whilst the then available force did not exceed 300 Europeans and 500 Sepoys. In six months three miles were finished; when the inhabitants seeing that no Mahrattas had ever been on the western side of the river within 60 miles of Calcutta, discontinued the work, which, from the occasion, was called the Mahratta Ditch. I do not know whether traces are left of this ditch; but its name is well known. The saying "he has never gone beyond the Ditch" in the sense of "he has never left Calcutta," is familiar to all. According to Orme's map, the Ditch commenced from the river at Chitpore, and passed along the Circular Road. The south-eastern limit of the ditch was near the corner of the Jaun Bazar Street§ and the Circular Road, from which point the Ditch was to pass in a straight line to the river near Cooly Bazar. This is the part of the work which remained unfinished. As a means of defence, the Ditch was worthless; nor was it used by the English during the attack of Sirájud-daulah in June 1756.

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* Obituary.

† Editor of the "Shamsullughát."

‡ Orme.

§ This is clear from Orme's plan of Calcutta in 1756.

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In 1752, the town of Calcutta, as described by Mr. Holwell in his Indian Tracts, was divided into four principal districts—*viz.*, 1, Dihi Calcutta, including Jonnagur, *i.e.*, the villages lying within the limits of Calcutta; 2, Govindpore; 3, Sootanattee; and 4, Bagua Calcutta; to each of which, and to the Burra Bazar, a district Cutchery was appointed.* The European part of the Settlement was a district *per se*. Mr. Holwell† computes the total area at 10,255 beegahs, of which 8,522 beegahs paid rent. Assuming six houses to every beegah, he got 51,132 houses, and multiplying this number by 8, which he calls a moderate number, the result would give a total of 409,056 constant inhabitants, without reckoning the multitude that were daily coming and going. Modern Calcutta, which extends from Chitpore along the Circular Road up to Tolly's Nullah, near the Alipore Bridge,‡ is about half as large again, and contains 15,115 beegahs or 7$\frac{1}{8}$ square miles. But the number of the population seems up to the present day a mystery.§ Holwell estimated, as just now mentioned, the population in 1752 at 409,000; a Police Committee fixed it, in 1800, at 500,000; Chief Justice Sir E. Hyde East, in 1814, at 700,000; the four Assessors in 1821 at not quite 180,000 (177,917); the Magistrates in 1821 at 205,600; Captain Steel in 1831 at nearly 411,000 (410,000), as Holwell in 1752; the Magistrates in 1852, at 413,000 (413,182); and Captain Simm's in the same year at 361,000 (361,369). The Census taken by the Justices during last year fell short of 400,000.

In 1810 the number of Europeans in the whole of Bengal, Calcutta included, was about 2,000.‖

The number of English houses at Calcutta before 1756 cannot have been less than seventy; at least Orme's plan has that number. The notorious Omichund was the proprietor of many of the houses.¶ The old Fort, which covered the site of Fairlie Place, the Custom

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* The accounts of which were transmitted to the great Cutchery at Dihi Calcutta.

† Holwell's Indian Tracts.

‡ According to the limits fixed in 1794 by the Government.

§ Simm's Survey.

‖ Simm's Survey, W. Hamilton.

¶ He possessed also an extensive garden in the Suburbs, where now Halsee Bagaun lies.

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House, and Coilah Ghaut, was neither large nor very strong. Its chief defect was the absence of proper ditches round about it. The sides to the east and west extended 210 yards; the southern side 130; the northern side 100: it had four bastions, mounting each ten guns; the curtains were only four feet thick, and terraces, which were the roofs of chambers, formed the top of the ramparts. In 1747, warehouses had been built contiguous to the south side of the Fort. The principal gate of the Fort faced the street between the old St. John's and the large tank, and was called the east gate. To either side of this gate there extended, along the walls of the old Fort, a range of chambers with a verandah before them. * These chambers were used as barracks for the soldiers. One of these rooms, scarcely twenty feet square, had two windows, which were however obstructed by the verandah. This small room was used as a guard-room in which the soldiers were confined; hence the garrison styled it "the Black Hole." It is useless to dwell on the horrible deed that was done within these twenty square-feet; every inhabitant of Calcutta has heard of the Black Hole. The following is perhaps less generally known. Up to the beginning of this century the Black Hole was a part of a warehouse, and filled with merchandize. A monument had been erected, before the gate, near the north-western corner of Tank Square by Governor Holwell, one of the twenty-three survivors. The inscription specified the names of forty-eight gentlemen, who, "with sundry other "inhabitants, Military and Militia,† to the number of 123 persons, "were, by the tyrannic violence of Sirájud-daulah, Súba of Bengal, suf-"focated in the Black Hole Prison on the night of the 20th day of "June 1756, and promiscuously thrown into the ditch of the ravelin "of this place." The inscription ended as follows: "This horrid act of "violence was as amply as deservedly revenged on Sirájud-daulah by "His Majesty's arms, under the conduct of Vice-Admiral Watson and "Colonel Clive, Anno 1757." This monument was once struck by lightning, and was at last (very properly) pulled down in 1819, together with the Black Hole itself, to make room for the new Custom House. ‡ The year before, in 1818, the last portion of a wall of the Old Fort had been removed, "on which occasion the solid and substantial fabric, "both as to brick and mortar, indicated a falling off in the art of build-"ing in India."

* Orme. † Holwell. ‡ Hamilton.

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The houses of the English inhabitants in 1756 occupied the ground about the Fort, *viz.*, 600 yards towards the east, and half a mile to the north and south of the Fort,* but lay scattered in spacious and separate enclosures, and several of them overlooked the Fort, as did the Church which stood opposite to the north-east bastion. The Fort was, therefore, much obstructed from the land side; hence the English were obliged to oppose Sirájud-daulah in the streets, and they being taken, the Fort fell as a matter of course. Opposite to the south-east bastion was the great tank, from which Tank Square (now Dalhousie Square) got its name.† There was a park round about the tank. On the north-western corner of the Square stood the Old Court House, which I mentioned above in connection with the Free School. It has given the name to the Old Court Lane and the Old Court House Street. The Old Court House evidently stood on the site of St. Andrew's Kirk.‡ (The Lecturer here referred to a plan of Calcutta.) The long avenue is the Lal Bazar; it was from this avenue that the soldiers of Sirájud-daulah commenced the attack. To the north of the great Tank, half-way between the Fort and the southern limit of the native town, stands the Armenian Church; the other Church to the east of St. Nazaret's must be the Portuguese Church. The number of Portuguese Christians was very considerable; for, when Sirájud-daulah approached the city, no less than 2,000 are said to have been admitted into the Fort.§

When Clive and Watson re-took Calcutta in January 1757, seven months after the sack, they found some of the best houses of the English demolished and others damaged by fire. Old St. John's lay in ruins. The Armenian and Portuguese Churches seem to have escaped. Everything of value belonging to the inhabitants had of course been removed. In the native town also many houses lay in ruins. The Burra Bazar had been burned down. No alterations had been made in the fortifications; but in the middle of the Fort a mosque had been erected with the material of several buildings|| which had been pulled down, to make room for it. Of the inhabi-

* Orme.

† Orme's plan of Calcutta in 1756.

‡ Orme's Plan of Calcutta in 1756.

§ Mangoe Lane, Cossitollah, Doomtollah, Armenian Street, Portuguese Church Street, existed in 1756.

|| Orme.

tants of the native town, most of whom had fled at the approach of Sirájud-daulah, about 50,000 are said to have afterwards returned. They were, however, mostly of the lower classes, as the rapacity of Manikchand, whom Sirájud-daulah had left as Governor of Calcutta, deterred such as were known to have property from trusting themselves within his reach.* The greatest part of the merchandizes belonging to the Company, which were stored up in the Fort when it was taken, were found untouched; for this part of the plunder had been reserved for the Nawab.

For the short time during which the town was in the hands of Sirajud-daulah, its name *Calcutta* was in official documents replaced by Alinagur.† This name is also mentioned in the famous Treaty between Clive and Mir Muhammad Jáfar, whom the English, after the battle of Plassy, had made Nawab of Bengal. According to this treaty, the English inhabitants of Calcutta recovered fifty, the Hindoos and Muhamadans twenty, and the Armenians seven lakhs of rupees, restitution-money. On the 6th July, about a year after the sack of Calcutta, there arrived from Murshidabad nearly seventy-three lakhs of rupees coined silver, packed up in 700 chests, and laden in 100 boats. Never before did the English nation obtain such a prize in solid money.‡ Before another six weeks, forty lakhs more coined silver arrived at Calcutta for the losses sustained by the Company. The treaty permitted the Company to establish a mint, and the first coin was issued at Calcutta on the 19th August 1757. The coins were, however, struck in the name of the Emperor at Delhi. The small thick pice still current among us are English-made, notwithstanding their native inscription. It was during the reign of William IV. that the Company commenced to strike rupees with the King's head and an English inscription. The old mint stood behind St. John's, where Ahmuty & Co. now are. Hence also Moran and Co. advertise now-a-days sales of indigo to be held at the "Old Mint Mart." The treaty also increased § the territory of Calcutta by 600 yards

* Orme. † Aitchison's Treatises, Engagements, Sunuds, &c.

‡ Orme.

§ The English on the other side had to promise to govern justly, and to take special care that no one be guilty of any crime, or drunkenness. The irregularities of the sailors had been complained of from the time of Charnock; and the Company's servants were frequently exposed to difficulties, because, in former times, cases of riot came before the Mogul Faujdar.—Bolts.

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beyond the ditch, and contained the grant of the 24-Pergunnahs. Immediately after the receipt of the restitution-money, a committee of the most respectable inhabitants was appointed to distribute the money. They executed the office with much discretion and equity. Commerce revived : the destroyed houses were built up again. In fact, we may date modern Calcutta from 1757. The present Fort William was commenced by Clive immediately after the battle of Plassy, but was not finished before 1773 ; it cost the Company from the first to the last twenty millions of rupees. The inhabitants of the native village situated between Chowringhee and the river got, in October 1757, the order to leave, and thus arose our *maidan*, "the lungs of Calcutta" as it has been styled. The numerous workmen and coolies employed in building the Fort are said to have formed a regular colony south of the Fort, and given rise to the name of the Cooly Bazar, now called Hastings. The formation of the airy *maidan* caused the European inhabitants gradually to shift their dwellings eastwards ; and whilst before 1756 the streets near Tank Square and the river were the fashionable quarters, they became afterwards the place for mercantile and government offices. The demolition of the Old Fort left the Company in possession of a large piece of ground which, naturally, was used for public buildings. This explains the large number of public offices situated up to the present day between Tank Square and the river.

The year 1757, distinguished as it is for the glorious success of the British arms in India, was also marked by one of the fearful epidemics which have not yet vanished from Bengal. The former insalubrity of Calcutta was so great, that, up to the end of the last century, the European inhabitants of Calcutta used to meet on the 15th November of each year, to congratulate each other on their escape from the rainy season and the effluvia of the salt lakes.* It would be erroneous to attribute the insalubrity of Calcutta to dampness of the soil. The soil round about Calcutta is *not* damp. This is best proved by the boring experiment instituted in Calcutta in 1814, when the first appearance of damp was at a depth of seventy-one feet, whilst again from seventy-six feet, the probable height of Calcutta above the sea, it was as dry as on the surface. The borer descended to 140 feet through clay and sand of various colors, when the experiment was given up.

* W. Hamilton.

The insalubrity of Calcutta arises from stagnant drains and decaying organic matter. The epidemic in Calcutta mentioned by Captain A. Hamilton about 1710 has been alluded to; the next is recorded to have prevailed in 1757, when patients were carried off after a cold stage of twelve hours; the third in 1762, when more than 50,000 Muhammadans and Hindoos, and 800 Europeans, died at Calcutta.* These epidemics generally lasted from August to December. The last epidemic known to me happened in 1833; but it raged more in Bhowanipore than in Calcutta itself. †

The General Hospital was founded as far back as 1769, ‡ on the place where it now stands.

House-rent has always been dear in Calcutta. Mr. William Bolts, who was a merchant and an Alderman of Calcutta in 1762, § states that he received from the Company for his duties as an Alderman £25 *per annum*, which, he says, will scarcely pay one month's house-rent in Calcutta. Bolts was a remarkable man. He was of German extraction, and arrived in India as a Company's servant. Having resigned the service, he commenced to trade, but was soon after forcibly put on board a ship and packed off as an interloper to England, where he composed his valuable book, entitled "Considerations on Indian Affairs." During the eight years of his residence at Calcutta he is said to have made a fortune of nine lakhs of rupees. In his book he states that there were in 1760 four Courts in Calcutta: *The Mayor's Court*, consisting of a Mayor and nine Aldermen, appointed by the Governor and Council of Calcutta, for hearing all civil suits, granting probate of wills and letters of administration for the estates of persons dying intestate; 2, *The Court of Appeals*, consisting of the Governor and three members of his Council. If the value sued exceeded £400, there lay an appeal to the King in Council; 3, *The Court of Requests*, consisting of twenty-four Commissioners, chosen by the Governor and the Council, from among the inhabitants of Calcutta, to hear every Thursday such cases where the matter of dispute did not exceed the value of forty shillings; 4, *The Court of Quarter Sessions*, consisting of the Governor and the Council. Besides

* Martin's Medical Topography of Calcutta.

† Lushington's Institutions.

‡ Lushington's Institutions.

§ Bolts.

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these four Courts which were established by Charter, there were three others, granted or connived at by the Moguls and the Nawabs. They were necessary for the preservation of good order in Calcutta. These Courts were the following:—1, The Kutchery, where some of the Company's servants decided all suits among natives to any amount. From the decisions of this Court the Company directed appeals to lie finally to the Governor and the Council; 2, The Zemindary or Faujdari Kutchery, presided over by a member of the Board of Council, who tried all criminal cases, where natives did not apply to the English Courts of Justice. Hanging being considered by the natives too ignominious a punishment, only the lash was permitted to be afflicted until death, but the *Chowbuksawars*, or lash-bearers, were sometimes so dexterous as to be able to kill a man with two or three strokes of the Indian *chowbuk*. The approbation of the Governor and Council was required, before the fatal stroke was given. A few years later hanging was introduced. The commotion among the Hindoos was very great, when, in July 1775, Nundo Kumar,* a Brahmin, was hung in Calcutta for forgeries. More than a hundred thousand natives surrounded the scaffold, believing that there was no intention of hanging him; but when they saw him actually executed, they ran down with one accord to the river, to wash out the pollution; 3, The Collector's Kutchery, established in 1757. The Collector generally was a member of the Council. 'He collects the revenues, and directs absolutely all judicial matters in the 24-Pergunnahs. He is greatly concerned in the police of the town of Calcutta, grants leases to the inhabitants for the tenures of their houses and grounds, grants licenses to the natives to marry, on which the Company also collects a duty of three rupees from each party, as well as on the sales of registered slaves.† Every necessary of life and many other articles brought to the bazars of Calcutta, pay a duty upon importation. The total revenues of the town of Calcutta for 1765 amounted to rupees 58,168. The principal Kutchery of the Collector is in Calcutta, where he transacts the business of his department, and where tenants under his jurisdiction, who are backward in their payments, are confined, whipped, and otherwise punished, independently of the other Courts at Calcutta.' Bolts also says that the collection of the taxes

* Obituary.

† Holwell states that in the case of poor natives, the marriage fee was generally remitted.

and duties in Calcutta gave occasion to great oppression; "for it is a "common thing to see the sepoys, who are stationed as guards at "different places, take from the poor, as they pass to market, something "out of every one's basket."

As the Governor and the Members of the Board of Council acted at one and the same time in so many judicial capacities, civil Justice did scarcely exist in Calcutta, especially in cases where the Governor, or any individual Member, was concerned. In February 1765, the Hindoos at Calcutta, in consequence of a sentence of death passed upon a Banian, Radha Churn Mitter, for forgeries, prayed the Council that the British laws might be translated into the Bengal language "So far from having any aversion to the British Laws," says Bolts, "the natives in general preferred them to their own in all matters "which did not affect their religious customs, but especially the trial "by juries. But it may be safely asserted that if the free and general "sense of all the inhabitants had been taken, they would have prayed "to be governed by any law whatsoever, rather than by the undeclared "will of the Secret Committee and the Governor of Calcutta." There were in those days many who thought that the natives had been better off under the Muhammadan Government, and who disapproved of the interfering spirit of the Europeans. Jos. Price also, addressing the House of Parliament, says in his 'Observations':—"Let the "poor, inoffensive, docile creatures alone to till their land, settle their "disputes, say their prayers, and go to heaven their own way. I have "journeyed naked, barefooted, and hungry, through their land; have "had them put rice on a leaf at my feet, and pour water into my "mouth, when overpowered with grief, fatigue, and misery, by the "wayside."

When a whole professional class of natives were, or thought themselves, wronged, they had recourse to meetings, and stopped the Governor's palankeen in order to present a petition in person.* Thus, in 1767, the salt-makers, or Malungees, of the Sunderbunds came up to Calcutta in a body to petition for liberty to remove their salt before the swelling of the river, as the Company had forbidden the sales of new-made salt. They surrounded the Governor's palankeen on the high road, and prostrating themselves before him, uttered thousand

* Bolts.

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Dua i Campani Sahibs—as the palkee-bearers did a few years ago in Calcutta.

Those were the good times when fortunes were made. To give an example. In 1765, a private Company was formed in Calcutta, among the servants of the Honorable Company (Lord Clive included), for the purpose of establishing a monopoly of salt, betel-nut, and tobacco. There were 60 shares, and the shareholders were the rulers of the country.* The Directors at home put a stop to it; but as the communication with England was very slow, the Company existed for two years, during which shareholders had a clear profit of 10,74,002 rupees. As soon as the monopoly was established, fines were imposed upon merchants that were found to sell salt at other prices than fixed by the shareholders, and two wealthy native firms, Soobiram Bysak and Modun Dutt, were on one occasion fined to the amount of Rs. 40,000, which fine is said to have been appropriated to the erecting of a Court House. And Parsick Aratoon, an Armenian merchant, who had in 1767† about 20,000 maunds of salt in Rungpore and Dinagepore, had his warehouses‡ broken open, and the salt was forcibly taken out and weighed off; and a sum of money, estimated to be the price of it, was forced upon the Armenian's gomashtahs. Nor was it Europeans alone who made their fortunes. A Muhammadan writer mentions the examples of Ram Chand, the Dewan, and of Nobo Krishna, ‡ Clive's Moonshee. The former left twelve and a half million of rupees at his death in 1767; and Nobo Krishna could afford to pay nine lakhs of rupees on the occasion of the death of his mother, although both men were, in 1757, in receipt of only sixty rupees per mensem.

The magnitude of the fortunes realised may be contrasted to the magnitude of the dreadful famine of 1770, which was as severely felt in Calcutta as in the whole of Bengal. § Already, in 1768 and 1769, the crops had proved scanty; in October 1769, scarcely a drop of rain fell; and in 1770, the famine set at last in. The highways and fields were strewed with the dying and the dead. The water and

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* Bolts. † Bolts.

‡ The descendants of this man live now at Calcutta.

§ In 1862, I saw an old woman at Buxar, who remembered this. She told me she was 12 years old at the time. She must, therefore, in 1862, have been 105 years of age.

the [illegible] the Hooghly were unfit for use. Rice sold at four seers [illegible] and was at last no longer to be had. Before the famine [illegible] per rupee was considered dear. Mutton is said to have been the only article that could be eaten with safety; all other meats [illegible] poisonous. More than three millions of inhabitants appear [illegible] cut off. Like the late famine in Orissa, it produced a great [illegible] at home, especially because the French in Chandernagor had spread [illegible] calumny that the servants of the Company had bought up the whole rice of the country, and had resorted to the inhuman expedient of an artificial famine, in order to establish a monopoly of grain.

In 1784, another famine prevailed, but in a much less degree; in 1787, many lives were lost by a great inundation; and again in 1788 by a partial scarcity.

During 1770, the year of the great famine, the Old or Mission Church was built at Calcutta by the Swedish Missionary Kiernander, at a cost of nearly Rs. 70,000. It got its name "Old Church" after 1784, when the present St. John's, or "the New Church" was commenced. Kiernander called his church by the Hebrew name 'Beth Tephilla.'

In 1772, the Company at last undertook the collection of the revenues by their own servants. Calcutta now became the seat of Fiscal Government, and thus the Capital of the Empire. The two Boards of Revenue appointed, in 1770, in Patna and Moorshedabad, gave way in 1781 to the Supreme Board of Revenue appointed in Calcutta, which still exists. The Supreme Court was established in 1774, and was fortunately made independent of the Governor and Council. The first Judges that arrived from England came out with very strong notions of the oppressions to which the people had been subject,* and when, on arrival at Chandpal-ghât, they saw the natives with their bare legs, one of them said to the other, "See, brother, the oppressions to "which the people have been subject. I hope our Court will not have "been six months in existence before these poor wretches will be again "comfortably provided with shoes and stockings."

After the completion, in 1773, of the Fort, which was then generally called the *New Fort*, the Governors lived in Fort William in the large house between St. Peter's and the present Catholic Chapel: it is

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now used as a Garrison Library. The present Government H[ouse] built in 1804 by Marquis Wellesley. The Directors objected [to] the outlay, but assented at last under the condition that seve[ral] offices were to receive accommodation in the lower-floor of t[he] ing. Marquis Wellesey had also made a plan to connect Go[vern]ment House in Calcutta with the Villa in Barrackpore by a straight [road] but the plan was given up as too costly.

The following particulars regarding the streets of Calcutta, about the year 1780, are perhaps of interest. The space between Middleton Street, Theatre Road, up to the Lower Circular Road, was called Dihí Birjee, from which the Birjee Tank, south of the Cathedral, got its name. Park Street was called Burial Ground Street, and had about ten houses lying along it. Free School Street did not yet exist; this very place * was a jungle of bamboos, where people were afraid to pass at night. Dhurrumtollah Bazaar did not exist either; it was only founded in 1794 The tank before Sudder Street was called Colinga Tank, and Ford Street appears to have been the old name of Sudder Street. There was a street called Ahmud Jemadar's Street where now Royd Street and Elliot Road are. Many of the lanes about Cossitollah (now Bentinck Street) and Tank Square had the same names as at the present day, as Grant's, Weston's, Zig-Zag, Imambari, Sooterkin's, Chanduey Choke, Cooper's, Mangoe, Dacre's, Crooked, Fancy, and Larkin's Lane; so also Raneemoody Gully (now British India Street). A street rejoicing in the name of Corkscrew Lane, was situated where the gun of the compound north of Government House stands; it led from Merler Place, now partly occupied by the Government House, to Fancy Lane. Along the Strand, where now the Bank of Bengal stands, was a road called King's Bench Walk, which led to Hastings' Street.

The present St. John's Church was commenced in 1784, a year which was also distinguished by the inauguration of the Asiatic Society by Sir W. Jones, then a Judge of the Supreme Court. His tomb is in the South Park Street Burial Ground, and was lately restored at a cost of Rs. 600. The burial ground was opened in 1767. It also contains the tomb of Lieut.-Col. Rob. Kyd, who died in 1793. He was the founder of the Botanical Garden; Kyd Street has been named after

* Doveton College, where the lecture, in 1867, was delivered.

e Roman Catholic Cathedral at Murghihatta was commenced
The Portuguese Burial Ground, a gift of Mr. Jos. Baretto,
ed in 1781. The French Burial Ground in Park Street was
a short time before 1796; it is also called Tiretta's Burial
Tiretta being the name of a French gentleman, who established
tta the bazaar known as the Tiretta Bazaar. The Madrasah
was established in 1788 by Warren Hastings; it was at first in Baitakanah, where certain grounds are up to this day called the Madrasah Mahal. The present Madrasah building in Wellesley Square was erected in 1827, and the tank before it was made by the Lottery Committee. Fort William College was founded on the 1st May 1800, that day having been chosen to commemorate the Conquest of Mysore. It was at first intended to build a suitable house in Garden Reach; but this project was not carried out, and Writers' Building was used instead. The word "Writer" was the name given to the lowest grade of the then Covenanted servants of the Company.

I shall conclude with a few remarks on Calcutta society previous to 1770; they are chiefly taken from Price's "Observations." Price had been in India for more than 30 years; he wrote his "Observations," in order to refute several malicious statements regarding English society in Calcutta made by a Mr. Macintosh in his book on "Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa." Macintosh's book of Travels, which appeared in London in 1782, is unfortunately not to be had in Calcutta; a few extracts only are known to me. Of Calcutta, as it was about 1770, Macintosh says, "It is one of the filthiest places in "the world, badly and irregularly built; it is only remarkable for a "few fine buildings scattered here and there; its immense population, "its great commerce, the show of luxury, and the voluptuousness of the "officers of the Company." Price says, "During the 30 years of my "residence I could never find one single luxury of the East so much "talked of in Calcutta, except sitting in an armchair, smoking a "*hookah*, and drinking cool water, when I could get it, and wearing "clean linen."

The fashions in those days were, of course, the same as in Europe. It was the last period of the time of cocked hats, wigs, and topboots. The only thing peculiar to India was the white jacket, which gentlemen invariably wore. Hookahs were in general use. The words "hubble-

bubble" and "tom-tom," I found in a book* printed at L[illegible] early as 1672. Macintosh says that the gentlemen in Calc[illegible] smoke in the company of the ladies. Price remarks, "This [illegible] "true; but Mr. Macintosh maliciously omits to state that the [illegible] "of sweet-scented Persian tobacco, sweet herbs, coarse suga[illegible] "&c., which they inhale by means of a long tube or snak[illegible] "through clean water, and is so very pleasant that many lad[illegible] "the tube, and draw a little of the smoke into their mouths, and almost "all ladies like the smell of it, as it goes off directly, and never "remains in the dresses, or the furniture of their rooms." Subsquently the hookahs seem to have gone down in the public favor, or at least in the favor of the ladies. The advertisements of balls, &c., in the old *Calcutta Gazette*, which first appeared in 1784, contain, generally, the remark "no hookahs admitted upstairs."†

Regarding the intercourse of the English with the residents of the other Settlements, Mr. Price says—"In peaceable times, the "European inhabitants of the English, French, and Dutch Settlements, "mingle together like one great patriarchal family of old. Their plays, "their masquerades, their Freemason's Clubs, their public balls on the "birthdays of their several sovereigns, are open to the three Settle-"ments. The commodities of the several nations on the arrival of their "European ships, are free to anybody to buy. Everywhere you may be "regaled with a tankard of English beer, a bottle of French wine, "and a slice of Dutch cheese. This friendly intercourse, in some "instances, produced its natural effects: the young people dancing and "romping together, became fond of each other. The French forbade "their Government servants from intermarrying with Protestants; "the English theirs from the same connexions with Roman Catholics; "but love breaks down all barriers, the lovers meet at Chinsurah, and "a Dutch Presbyterian ties them up." During the thirty years of his residence, Mr. Price heard of eight or ten of such forbidden matches, and some of the poor criminals were dismissed from the service of the Company, and turned adrift, a prey to fortune.

The daily occupations of the gentlemen were simple. They took a ride a little before day-break until 8 o'clock, then they would breakfast, and go directly to the public offices, "where they *write* hard

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* Dr. Fryer's Travels. † Seton-Karr, vol. I.

clock. They then dine, and, if all their daily business ... they smoke sweet-scented tobacco, drink tea, visit the ... and perhaps dance with them, or sup with them, or, which ... common, attend them in their visitings, which is always ...ng, after which they go home, and are fast asleep by ... Macintosh in several places reproaches the servants of ... for their habit of tea-sipping. We have to remember ... just become general. Bolts also has a curious sentence, he ... tea, we had better not consume it at all; because it is ... the purchase, and many ways hurtful in its use."

...thing which Macintosh ever said against the gentle... is, that they are rude towards ladies. Price, however, ... refutes the charge by stating, that the extreme atten... ness shewn to ladies by all gentlemen had long since ... to call Calcutta "The Ladies' Paradise."

FINIS.

CALCUTTA,
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